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MAYOR  
**LEONA VIGIL**  
CITY MANAGER



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**FRANK ORTEGA**  
CITY COUNCIL

**CITY OF BELEN**  
**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**SEPTEMBER 9, 2019**

Chairman Steve Ethridge called the regular meeting of the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Steve Ethridge  
Commissioner Jim Lardner  
Vice Chair Pete Armstrong  
Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon  
Commissioner Claudine Montano

**CITY STAFF:** Steven Tomita, Planning & Economic Development Director

**OTHERS:** Roland Sanchez, Self  
Valerie Sanchez, Self  
Raquel Silva, Self  
Bob Graves, Self  
Sandy Graves, Self  
Karen Chavez, Self  
Frances Chavez, Self  
Ben Sais, Self  
Helen Torres, Self  
John & Natalie (Unledgable)

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**  
Commissioner Jim Lardner moved to approve agenda.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong seconded the motion.

Motion Carried.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

None available.

**PUBLIC COMMENT – 3 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS**

None

**PUBLIC HEARING WITH POSSIBLE ACTION**

**A. Swear in Participants**

All participants were sworn in.

**B. REQUEST FOR A ZONE CHANGE FROM R-1 TO SU-1: KAREN CHAVEZ, for the purpose of converting a garage into a home. LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Township 5 North, Range 2 East, Section 18, Map 100, Lot 34, Radcliff Addition, aka 501 N 11th St., Belen, NM, 87002.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission on the location of the property. The property is presently zones R-1. The Owner was informed that she would need to apply for a zone change. The zone she would need would be an SU-1 (Special Use). The concern that the staff has is that it is completely converting the garage into a permanent home. It will be a full second home on the property. This is not something that is temporary, it is permanent. There is an also concern that this is setting a precedent if approved.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said it might be setting a precedent but in each case, they have to go through the same process that this application. Each case is heard on an individual basis. Commissioner Jim Lardner asked if the garage was built under a Variance because it looks like it does not meet our setbacks.

Steven Tomita said that it was an older building and has been there for years. If the garage was ever torn down and replaced, they would have to comply with the setbacks.

Chairman Steve Ethridge asked if the garage was built with proper permitting.

Steven Tomita said that is unknown.

Ms. Karen Ortiz informed the Commission that her son & daughter-in-law is her caregivers. They need a home to live in close to her. She wants to convert her garage into a home for her son and Daughter-in-law. The garage is a very well and sturdy build building.

Commissioner Claudine Montano asked her if the present home was big enough for them to move into it.

Ms. Ortiz said that they tried that and it is not big enough. Her home is a three bedroom home and her son has five children.

Chairman Steve Ethridge asked if she knew if the garage was built with property permitting.

Ms. Ortiz said she did not know, she inherited the home and it was already there. She did not know when the garage was built. It is presently being used for storage. Her sons stuff in what is in the garage.

Chairman Steve Ethridge asked if she has plans on building with all the proper permitting required for the construction of a home.

Ms. Ortiz said absolutely.

Mr. John Barber (Son) informed the Commission that all permitting would be done and it would go through any process that was needed. He has had a concrete inspector come out and inspect the existing slab and building. This Engineer explained what he would need to do to convert the garage. He was told that the concrete was ok to convert the garage. He has looked all over Belen for a rental home but has been unable to find one that was sufficient for his family. He has five children along with him and his wife. He also plans to re-landscape the whole lot. It has been ruff for him and his family to commute from where they are at to the home on N 11th St. His wife Natalie said that she has been taken care of Ms. Ortiz for five years and her health has been getting worse. She is needing more care. The grandmother is also requiring more care. It would benefit the family as a whole. They are trying to do this the correct way.

Commissioner Jim Lardner asked if the sewer and water would be connected to the existing home or would it be separate.

Steven Tomita said that they would be required to have separate services because the existing services for the existing home on the property would not be sufficient to support two homes.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong moved to approve the zone change with the conditions that all permitting be done properly.

Commissioner Jim Lardner seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Motion was as follows:

Commissioner Claudine Montano	Yes
Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon	Yes
Vice Chair Pete Armstrong	Yes
Commissioner Jim Lardner	Yes

Mrs. Ortiz was informed that the P & Z Commission approval is a recommendation to the City Council. The final approval will be heard by the City Council on the 16th of September.

**C. REQUEST FOR A ZONE CHANGE FROM A-G TO C-1: ROLAND AND VALERIE SANCHEZ, for the purpose of accommodating medical related operations. LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Land of Glenn & Ida Oliver Tract: 267B1A3B 0.19 Acre, Map 100 1991 REV, aka 1607 Camino Del Llano, Belen, NM 87002.

Vice Chairman Pete Armstrong said that he would like to inform the Commission that Dr. Sanchez is his Dr. and would like to know if he needs to recuse himself from this hearing.

Steven Tomita asked him if he thought he could be impartial.

Vice Chairman Pete Armstrong said, yes he could.

Everyone was ok with this.

Steven Tomita explained where the property was located. He also informed the Commission that Dr. Sanchez also owns the property on the corner of Camino Del Llano and Mesa Rd. This property was before the Commission and Council for approval of a zone change. It was approved. Dr. Sanchez would like to expand his business to include the property next to it. The traffic along Camino Del Llano was explained being a main road. The area along Camino Del Llano is conducive for this type of development. One surrounding resident was unable to attend but those owners do not have any problems with this request.

Dr. Sanchez explained that they bought this property because of all of the riff-raff that was going in and out of the home. They would leave all of their trash all over the place. He took over the property, cleaned it up, and did repairs. His long-term plan is to lease this property to provide sonograms. This way anyone having to go to Albuquerque for ultra sounds-scans, etc. would be able to have them done here. It would share the parking lot with the Dental Laboratory.

Commissioner Jim Lardner asked if they would be enlarging the building.

Dr. Sanchez said no. They would be adding ADA compliant doors, etc. He estimated that there would be an average of 5 to 10 patients a day coming and going.

Mr. Robert Graves said that he live right behind this property and he has no problem with it. They just want to know what is going on. The only thing that they would like is a privacy fence put up along the back of the property. His wife Sandy Graves wanted to know how long this would take and how much noise will be generated form this.

Dr. Sanchez said that there would be a three month time period for the cleanup and renovation. They hopefully will have no major problems with the repairs to the structure.

Ms. Helen Torres asked if she would be receiving any noise from the traffic in and out of this property.

Ms. Raquel Silva, Manager for the Dental Laboratory, said that everyone needs to consider the fact that he did purchase this property. If he hadn't who knows what would have happened. The fence and the traffic was discussed.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong moved to approve the zone change with the condition that a maximum height of a 6' pro-panel be placed along the back of the property up to the existing fence at the Dental Laboratory. This fence can be placed inside of the property line.

Commissioner Claudine Montano seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Vote was as follows:

Commissioner Claudine Montano	Yes
Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon	Yes
Vice Chair Pete Armstrong	Yes
Commissioner Jim Lardner	Yes

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Downtown Master Plan**

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that the version they had is different then the one that he has.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that his page 30 ends with pedestrian connections.

Steven Tomita said that he is just trying to make sure that they do not miss anything. He compared their index with the one that he has. He is not concerned about the page number.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that some of the document that he has is different than his and some of the Commissioners.

Commissioner Claudine Montano had to leave.

They compared the documents that they had and there are differences with all of them.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong made a general overall statement. It appears that there has been a lot of work that have been put into subsets of the Downtown Master Plan document. What has been done with the other documents with the different plans, he feels that they may just be spinning their wheels. Many of the things that have been placed in these plans have not been done.

Steven Tomita said that there is the Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Master Plan, the Affordable Housing Plan, etc., but not all of them refer to the different plans or include any of the information from one plan to the other. Under state law we are supposed to be following the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he did not really care whether this distinction is included in the Comprehensive Plan or not. A lot of time has been spent on advising this City on how it should be going forward. He looks around and sees where little pockets are being done but, the documents show even sometimes 10 years later, where nothing has been done.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that you have to remember that the last 10 years have not been very good for the City of Belen. The last few years have been much friendlier.

Steven Tomita said that they are getting to where he has been trying to educate everyone on the different plans that the City does have. We need an implementation plan so that all of these plans can be implemented instead of gathering dust on a shelf.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said they need to find funding. Things cannot be implemented until the funding is there.

Steven Tomita said that an Implementation Plan who show who is responsible for what areas, in what time frames it is expected to be done, and how this is supposed to be done. Without this plan they all get stuck on a shelf and forgotten. Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he is amazed with the amount of funding that is available for the City to use. Fund implementation needs to be done for this.

Steven Tomita said that it needs to be done. We need an Implementation Plan which will show who will be handling and completing different sections of the plan and who will be doing it. We need to get this Comprehensive Plan done or the City will not be eligible for state or federal funding. This Plan will also need to go to the public for review and then to the City Council for final approval. Once this plan is done we can then focus on the implementation of the plans. This Commission needs to gather this information and create a document on what we would like to see for the future of the City of Belen. The Commission is the group that will make recommendations as to who will implement the different parts of the Plan.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that all of the information that they are being given is a bit overwhelming. The history, which he has seen in some of the other documents, needs to be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

Steven Tomita said that the Affordable Housing Plan that they are reviewing covers the revitalization of the downtown area and parts of it can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission is updating the Comprehensive Plan at this time. They are reviewing some of the other plans to see if they feel if any of the information from those plans should be added to the Comprehensive Plan. He said that they should look at the Queen Creek Plan it would give them a good idea what a thorough plan looks like. That document is very detailed, which is what a Comprehensive Plan should look like.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that he thinks that they should have a framework for the Comprehensive Plan, that they can start plugging information into to create this plan.

Steven Tomita said that he thought it was a good idea.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that they need a structure to start plugging all this information into.

Steven Tomita said that the Commission has already gone through the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan that covers some history, Census information, etc., but now they are at the point of deciding what they want to see for the future of Belen and place that in the appropriate area of the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that there are five established growth nodes that will need to be addressed more extensively in the Comprehensive Plan. He mentioned tossing out the existing Comprehensive Plan and using the Affordable Housing Plan and expanding on it to create a new Comprehensive Plan.

Steven Tomita said that if they do that it would bring them right back to the beginning where they started revising the existing Comprehensive Plan.

Steven Tomita said that if they do that it would bring them right back to the beginning where they started revising the existing Comprehensive Plan. The Strategic Growth Plan covers the different land uses and the growth nodes and this needs to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. He said if he took and went through it and came up with a structure (outline) to work with, would it be easier for the Commission to correlate everything into the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a guideline for the future. It can change and be updated all the time.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**Communication from the Commission and Staff.**

Steven Tomita said that Tractor Supply has not given up on Belen. They have submitted drainage and grading preliminary plans for review. They plan on moving forward. There is a lot of interest in the area for development. Several of the buildings along Becker Ave are being looked at. The film industry is looking at the area again. There is an HBO production looking at coming to Belen. These are things that can be used for tourism in Belen. A national builder has done some studies and have deemed Belen as the best area for housing in Valencia County, which is good news.

**ADJOURN**


There being no further business to come before the City of Belen Planning & Zoning Commission, Commissioner Jim Lardner moved to adjourn.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong seconded the motion

Motion carried.

  
Chairman Steve Ethridge

ATTEST:

  
Steven Tomita, Planning & Economic Development Director